

Summary

“And all that I do not manage to prove, or what our time denies — for this I appeal to posterity, not misled by parties or one-sided systems.”

J. C. F. Hæffner in *Phosphoros*, August 1810 Page 115.

“Nothing would be more welcome, than a thorough and respectable criticism, that did justice to what is achieved, but [also] showed the way to higher perfection. Until such a connoisseur appears, from now on I hope to maintain silence and let my work defend itself.”

J. C. F. Hæffner in *Stockholms Posten*, 1821 Number 94.

Dillmar, A. 2001: “The stab of death to our national art of music”. The chorale reform during the time of Hæffner in elucidation by history, ethnohymnology and theomusicology. (“Dödshugget mot vår nationella tonkonst”. Hæffnertidens koralreform i historisk, etnohymnologisk och musikteologisk belysning.) ISBN 91-628-4616-7

Doktoral dissertation presented at the Department of Art and Musicology, University of Lund, Sweden, 2001. (Institutionen för Konst- och musikvetenskap, Box 117, S-221 00 Lund, Sverige). <http://www.arthist.lu.se>

Obtainable from the author: dillmar@bahnhof.se

Introduction

The chorale books edited in 1820-21 by Johann Christian Friedrich Hæffner¹ are in older Swedish debate on the one hand described as a “stab of death” to national chorale singing and as doing serious harm to “the Swedish culture of music” — on the other hand as a rescue of hymn-singing from complete disorder.

These contradictory statements constitute one of the starting-points in this thesis. Another is the great impact of this style of music. It is nowadays more and more considered as problematic, lacking in interest, boring and difficult to understand, and also as giving rise to thoughtless singing without attention to the hymn text. In spite of this criticism the latest Swedish chorale book from 1987 still contains several examples of settings in the chorale style of Hæffner. Furthermore, the renaissance of folk musical chorale singing during the last decades of the 20th century and new research concerning old singing practice has put Hæffner’s contribution in new light.

Hæffner, who was born in Thüringen in Germany, arrived 1781 in Sweden as the new organist of the German Church in Stockholm. His great interest in opera gradually brought about his appointment as Conductor of the Royal music. After the closing of the opera in Stockholm in 1806 he moved to Uppsala as *director musices* at the University, where in addition to academic festival music he worked for the students’ choral singing and amateurs music-making. He also took part in the first printed edition of Swedish folk-song (medieval ballads) edited by Erik G Geijer and Arvid August Afzelius. Due to his interest in church music Hæffner

¹ His name is also written Haeffner, Häffner, Haëffner, Häeffner, Haffner, Haefner, Häfner.

was appointed editor of the new chorale book when the new hymnal edited by Johan Olof Wallin was finally completed in 1819 after nearly 50 years of work. At that time Hæffner also was elected organist of the Cathedral of Uppsala. The two parts of his chorale book printed in 1820-21 constitute the main subject of this thesis.

These chorale books of Hæffner have never previously been given any exhaustive and thorough analysis, though much is written about them. From the beginning they were highly regarded, but from the middle of the 19th century a more critical attitude grew stronger. This attitude became predominant during the 20th century. This is understandable due to practical considerations in a new musical context, but at the same time it led to an anachronistic approach. Hæffner was more and more described as a mythical figure, and the criticism against him was centred on the rhythmic and melodic design of the chorales. His harmonic conception was regarded more positively, though he often was accused of too much love for church modes. Also the general understanding falsely included that Hæffner had caused the very slow chorale tempo of the 19th century. A beginning of re-evaluation was discernible from the middle of the 20th century, when Hæffner was described as the first one to fight against the slow tempo of his day.

Until today there is no comprehensive account of Hæffner's chorale books of 1820-21 in relation to contemporary ideas and practices. The creation and reception of these are surrounded by many obscurities. The relationship between his different editions² (especially those of 1808 and 1820-21) has not been investigated earlier, nor his musical intentions. Neither has the edition of 1820-21 been compared to other manuscripts or printed chorale books of his time; of the latter should especially be mentioned the one by Johan Dillner from 1830 and the one by Olof Åhlström from 1832. Likewise the importance of the Swedish Royal Musical Academy (KMA) for Hæffner's chorale book of 1820 has never before been elucidated.

The aim of this dissertation is — in the light of newer knowledge of older chorale singing practice — to study *the thoughts behind and the practical realization of the Swedish reform of congregation singing at the beginning of the 19th century and Hæffner's role in that process*. This reform is understood in an international context.

The centre of this account is, apart from the historical course, the results of an ambition to understand the ideas behind the reform. The preserved material offers very good opportunities for an investigation in this perspective; this is here summarised as aesthetics of chorale and theology of music. The latter refers to the theological arguments aside from the aesthetics that were central for the design of the chorale books of 1820-21. The music did have a pronounced religious and theologically justified function. For my efforts to understand the Hæffner chorale in this respect I have had great advantage of the growing subject *theology of music*, perhaps more in the American and European form *theomusicology* than the special German *Theologie der Musik*. There are many links with the musicological debate on "the meaning of music". This may be a new contribution to the hymnological field of research. Besides this ideological perspective the practical singing and playing have contributed to many new issues, especially in its popular shape. This is summarised as ethnohymnology.

However, for practical reasons the interdisciplinary perspective has been reduced. Even if hymn text and music often form a unity and for this reason should be analysed together, chorale melodies also can live a life of their own. Hence an examination of the music only is also motivated. But after the historical contextualization is done, parallel scientific studies of text and music should be brought up again.

² Around 1781 for Saint Gertrud's German Parish in Stockholm (not accomplished), 1800 (not preserved), 1807-08 (printed in whole in 1808), 1812-18 a German "Universal-Choralbok" (sample sheet printed but not preserved), 1820-21 (printed), and 1828 a Chorale book for the German parish in Stockholm (manuscript in Uppsala UUB sv vok mus i hs 93:6). Furthermore, in 1820 Hæffner tried to make a Chorale Book for Finland.

It should be observed that the subject of this study, the “chorale” (Swedish “koral”, German “Choral”), stylistically does not correspond to the varied style of hymns today (Swedish “psalm”, “kyrkovisa” or “sång”; German “Kirchenlied”).

Chapter 1. Hymn-singing in Sweden around 1800

There is a large number of Swedish examples for an older — here meaning before the chorale books of 1820-21 — individualized way of singing chorales. From earlier research its characteristics can be summarised as powerful, slow, rhythmically and melodically heterophonic, abundantly ornamented, sometimes with glissandi and vibrating of the voice. Intonation has built on older opinions of tonality. The freedom in the singing situation resulted in a very sonorous but also discordant sound.

The spread of this singing style can be confirmed in many geographical parts of Sweden and in different types of parishes — not only in rural parts but also in cities. Chronologically examples exist from the whole lifetime of Hæffner, roughly from the end of the 18th to the middle of the 19th century. Then a new unison ideal was established consisting of elevated simplicity and devotion in a dignified manner. That the older way of singing would have lacked these features — it is often accused of disturbing the devotion — is contradicted by the original sources. Instead there seems to have been a conflict between two different aesthetic systems, with different social roots. For these there were also different theologies of music.

When discussing the singing of chorales before the alleged hæffnerian “stab of death” some conceptions and facts have to be remembered. First there is no proof that the chorale book of 1697 corresponded to the older established singing practice, neither its substance nor its performance. Evidence exists for the use of many other chorale melodies than those contained in the printed chorale book. Its score does not correspond to contemporary verbal statements or later recordings of popular chorale singing. Accordingly it is important to separate the popular way of singing from the popular melodies, but often only the latter has been in the centre of attention. For the evaluation of the chorale books of Hæffner in 1820-21 the uncertain degree of reception of the edition from 1697 is of great importance.

Chapter 2. The chorale question in some other countries around 1800

To get the individualized way of singing in Sweden into perspective it is elucidatory to compare to similar practices in other countries.

More than 300 years ago a special popular singing practice was described in England, as the “Old, “Common” or “usual way” of singing. During the 18th century the descriptions became more and more negative, which can be understood in the light of new ideals. These were called “Regular singing” and built on notation and a more artistic and regular ornamentation.

In musicology the old way of singing is now understood as an old popular and general practice with international distribution, even though some indications of art-music influence exists as well. It was also spread among other confessions than the Christian, and today this practice has been confirmed in folksong and older surviving chorale singing in the USA and Europe. Yet the hymnologic research, especially the German, has to a very small degree paid attention to the phenomenon, in spite of descriptions in many sources.

Distinctive features were an almost incomprehensibly slow tempo, with far from simultaneous song, and embellishment of the basic melody with a great amount of extra tones. This ornamentation was performed in a non-art musical way between the head notes and not seldom resulted in discordant harmony. Sometimes there also occurred more intentional harmonic additions as bourdons, descants and lower parts, some of these in time established as variants of

the melodies and later written down as such. The singing was loud and also associated with a peculiar pedagogy called "lining-out", and in most cases without accompaniment.

The new manner of singing was motivated in several different ways, and, irrespective of the relationship between them, they formed important components in the reform of chorale singing in different countries. As a common feature it was said that devotion demanded a more orderly and attractive way of singing. This may too easily be interpreted only as an aesthetic claim, as a question of taste, with a "should be" as the chief argument. But it was combined with the idea of older unspoiled melodies being more original and natural and hence representing a more noble chorale form. Through the nearness to the Lutheran reformation they owned a spiritual strength that in a more profound way could express the intended liturgical seriousness and solemnity, create dignity and order and contribute to an experience of the common instead of the individual. This shows a theology of music with a special concept of God, but also linked to national and political opinions where culture provided an important support for national liberty and unification of different sociological sections of the population.

Chapter 3. A growing reaction

To understand the type of chorale that in Sweden has become associated with the year 1820 attention must be paid to the German origin of the editor Hæffner. Early he took Johann Sebastian Bach for a model, but he also adopted the ideas and chorales written by Luther. During childhood Hæffner had participated in performances of music in the local church conducted by his father. Through tuition given by Johann Gottfried Vierling and Johann Adam Hiller he probably got a more critical attitude to the singing practice of ordinary people. Hæffner was deeply influenced by Georg Benda in Gotha, but also by Catholic splendour of worship and by studies with a Catholic priest in Amöneburg, who was well informed on the ideas of Luther. While travelling in Germany he observed the singing of chorales, among others in Moravian parishes.

When he arrived in Sweden in 1781 discussions about the chorale practice were going on. One of the active debaters was his friend Joseph Martin Kraus, who had already published a pamphlet on the subject in Germany. In Sweden there was a divergence of opinion concerning the playing of the organ in the chorales. This instrument seems to have had a strong symbolic function, apparent in the writings of persons like Carl Michael Bellman and Abraham Abrahamsson Hülphers. The same year as Hæffner was elected member of the KMA (1788) Åhlström was given a commission to "compose" a new chorale book, but because of his monopoly of printing music in Sweden nothing happened for many years. The commitment of the KMA to a chorale book presumably not only originated in financial motives but also in a conscientiousness to raise the level of church music in Sweden. Also Gustav III seems to have taken a genuine interest in liturgical questions, apparent during the preparations for the 200th anniversary of Sweden becoming Lutheran.

With the death of Kraus Hæffner got into the centre of the events, when given the responsibility for the music at the anniversary celebration in 1793. In his festival cantata he used a chorale written by Luther *Vår Gud är oss en väldig borg* [*Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott / A safe stronghold our God is still*], presented in its "original" version and thus questioning the Swedish chorale tradition. Even if the practice of singing and playing chorales by this time was rather divided, his contribution to the debate can be described as provocative in respect to the national significance of the anniversary. Hæffner's conception of the melody some decades later became Swedish practice and in its fundamental feature still applies. It should be noted that even after 1793 Hæffner was interested in the chorale question and dared to revise his opinions. His final idea of the rhythm of the melody was motivated rather by principle than by a concrete model, but it can be established as a fact that he was not alone in his opinion. In general, the type of

chorale that was gradually associated with Hæffner's name did exist in Sweden long before his arrival here.

Chapter 4. Debate in connection with the anniversary celebration of 1793

With his musical contribution to the debate at the anniversary celebration of 1793, i.e. Luther's chorale *Vår Gud är oss en väldig borg*, it can be assumed that Hæffner later followed the Swedish discussions of the issue with interest. To the jubilee the Swedish archbishop had commissioned new chorales by Åhlström to some texts that were lacking melodies in the newly printed hymnal on trial. Åhlström had also guaranteed a new chorale book as soon as possible. Despite the wish for a rapid treatment a new revision of the hymnal was decided on and with that the chorale question went into a new period of calm. The debate, though, did not cease. A large amount of articles in newspapers and periodicals was produced, concerning not only the hymns but explicitly also the chorales. This in turn was part of a larger liturgical reform in the Swedish church, where Hæffner and Åhlström in 1799 made a joint effort by editing and printing the liturgical music.

In the debate many chorale melodies were marked as valuable and beautiful and thus worthy to be preserved. But against this it was said that too many melodies caused problems by being mixed up, especially in churches without organs. In the question of church modes the debaters also disagreed; some wanted to keep them, others regarded them as outdated. Some contributors pointed to the necessity of musical aspects being observed by the appointed Hymn committee. Some reminded of the living tradition of old melodies outside the chorale book of 1697 and that they should be paid attention to in a new edition. A nationally valid edition was considered necessary with regard to the migratory seasons when people by changing parish moved into a new singing tradition with accompanying problems of singing the melodies.

Perhaps the clergyman Israel Geringius made the most well reasoned contribution to the debate. He argued that mostly well known melodies should be used, even if new compositions could also be of interest where there was an organ to support the singing. He also referred to an old chorale tradition outside the chorale book with roots in the 16th century. As a basis of his reasoning he presented a detailed theological and aesthetical model supported by the Church Fathers. Worship of God should be done with an artistic and solemn singing and music, with "modest grace". Now the development of church music had become stagnant and was in need of reform. Hymn-singing had to be liberated from the dissonant and crude practice and be given a more harmonious shape. A new chorale book should chiefly aim at the present and instead of old melodies have a simple content without too big differences compared to present chorale tradition. Indeed some renewal could liven up, but too much could rather stir up trouble, and enlightenment and truth in church could never be pushed aside by "divertation of the senses", for example through new chorale melodies.

Also recurring in the debate was the wish for a more edifying and devout way of playing the organ, as it was described to be in Stockholm. In an existential perspective and in worship music was considered "indispensable", it could be understood as adoration without words. But the organ also improved the sound of a congregation, whose singing indeed had the purpose of making all attenders of the service active participants in the devotion. There were plenty of methods of playing the hymns, and the debate revealed a clash between an older one with embellished interludes between the phrases and a newer where all this was cancelled. A middle course with simple interludes was recommended as a rule, not least in regard to the seriousness and dignity of the worship, but this could still include a number of different ways of playing.

To sum up, both the chorale situation and the debate by the time of the anniversary of 1793 can be described as miscellaneous, though with some clear tendencies.

Chapter 5. The chorale books of Vogler and Hæffner around 1800

The chorale books by Abbé Vogler and Hæffner from 1799 and 1800 respectively, the latter in manuscript and not preserved, can both be seen as answers to the debate after the anniversary of 1793. An important factor of background was also the work of the KMA for a new chorale book since 1788. Already in 1796 Hæffner was mentioned as one of several possible editors, in spite of the fact that the formal commission since some years was lying on Åhlström. The fact that the view of the KMA about Vogler's chorale book was to a great extent in accordance with the one of Hæffner probably strengthened his commitment, especially when Vogler disparagingly and publicly criticized him in the press. The Master of the Royal music was hardly one of Vogler's "pupils of chorales".

Accordingly Hæffner's own manuscript of a chorale book can be conceived as an answer to Vogler's edition. The assessment of the KMA was very positive, and so the Academy recommended an edition for printing as the hitherto most useful in Sweden. In discussions the KMA displayed interesting connections with the Moravian singing of chorales. When the completed manuscript was finally printed in 1807-08 the edition was still strongly supported by the KMA and seems to have achieved a large circulation in the whole contemporary Swedish kingdom, which also included Finland. Presumably Hæffner himself contributed to this by presenting and motivating the content of the edition in newspaper articles. But there was also a general demand for a new chorale book and Hæffner explicitly left great space for local melody traditions. In other words, the edition did not represent a threat to prevailing practice, on the contrary it corresponded to it. Where differences were at hand compared to the previous editions Hæffner referred to the singing of the congregations: the old modal melodies were better or more correctly sung than the organists played them. Specifically this referred to the singing being less in major/minor mode and using a low opening note of the scale used.

Chapter 6. The chorale question 1809-12

During the 1810's Hæffner became involved in a historically well-known conflict with Pehr Frigel, the secretary of the KMA. To a great extent it seems to have originated in a misunderstanding. Even if they were of different opinions in some chorale questions, these were not primarily a matter of principle; both Hæffner and Frigel agreed for example on triple time being inappropriate for chorales, and that not too many new melodies should be used. They had both acquired the "new" values of their time about the "right" design of the chorale. In some cases Frigel defended the Swedish song tradition and Hæffner the original version, but this was mainly due to practical considerations of what a chorale book should contain and to the supposed value of the old melodies. When Hæffner asserted that the existing amount of melody variants was too large he demonstrated a better acquaintance with the Swedish singing tradition than Frigel did. But for the future Frigel's solid workmanship in the committee was decisive and contributed to the preservation of many old and forgotten melodies. Nevertheless he was not totally honest in the debate with Hæffner, for example in his denial of having discussed an edition of a chorale book in a certain memorandum. Contrary to Hæffner he also strongly insisted on an editorial staff for the work of a new national chorale book. However, his ideas of a composition competition seem to have come to nothing.

Surely Hæffner's criticism had its origin in a different geographic and social position; Frigel as living in Stockholm and being the secretary of the KMA had been appointed a Hymn committee member despite that Hæffner not unreasonably held himself to be more qualified for the mission. Frigel also admitted Hæffner's superiority. At the same time Hæffner stands out as much more influenced by the early German literary romanticism, which might have been a problem.

After Hæffner's criticism Frigel succeeded in getting Royal authorization for his mandate. This can be interpreted as an attempt to mediate between them, as the archbishop maintained that the commission was given to the KMA and not to Frigel personally. For Hæffner this would become an argument for his right to express his points of view.

Chapter 7. Work with chorales 1813-18

To understand why Hæffner was given the mandate to elaborate the new chorale book all information about Hæffner's chorale thoughts from 1813 until 1818 has to be examined. Moreover, the work of the Hymn committee, of Frigel and of the KMA for a new chorale book have been accounted for. The KMA was after a Royal decision of 1812 responsible for the music and held the opinion that church music in Sweden had fallen into decay.

Why was Hæffner appointed for this mission after Frigel's solid work? One very interesting factor seems to have been his edition of a German "Universal Choral Buch", during several years in co-operation with the vicar Rambach in Hamburg, but it was interrupted with his death in 1818. This project indicates a certain international fame for Hæffner.

Another important factor was Hæffner's very strong position in Uppsala, not the least his central role at the anniversary of the Reformation in 1817 when he stood out as one of the most prominent experts of church music in Sweden. Articles in the newspapers had built up this position during several years, as also his edition of liturgical music in 1799 and his widely used chorale book of 1808. By his own public criticism of these editions he probably strengthened his reputation. The actual differences in relation to Frigel seem to have been much smaller than the debate unmasked when in 1813 Hæffner intensively attacked Frigel, though he was not alone in this criticism. It should be noted that both debaters essentially were of the same opinion that a prosodic declamatory solemnity should characterize the chorales. This was of old Swedish tradition. Even if Hæffner developed his views of the chorale during the second decade of the 18th century, in their fundamental feature they can be described as stable and integrated with his other enterprises, e.g. his work with Swedish folk-song. His musical universe constituted a whole.

During this debate in 1813 Hæffner publicly proposed that he together with other skilled organists should edit a new chorale book. Frigel held strong doubts against his ideas, especially that the commission should be given to him alone, as he had proposed Frigel by letter in 1810. Frigel's work in the Hymn Committee became very significant for the future and laid the foundation of Hæffner's enlargement. Without Frigel Hæffner's chorale books of 1820-21 had looked different.

Chapter 8. The creation of Hæffner's chorale books of 1820-21

In this chapter the course of events concerning the creation of Hæffner's chorale books of 1820-21 are studied. The often stated reason that he was charged with this work through Geijer is here supplemented: after a revised edition of his ten year old chorale book in the autumn of 1818 — probably the already mentioned German "Universal Choral Buch" — he seems to have been contacted by the Hymn committee for a new chorale composition, which he composed despite earlier marked resistance. Shortly afterwards he was appointed at special musical meetings with some members of the Hymn committee to choose melodies for the hymns. In these meetings also Åhlström and Erik von Rosén took part, well-reputed organists in Stockholm and members of the KMA. Hæffner worked out the four-part settings of these melodies, which was finished in March 1819.

The source material shows great appreciation of Hæffner's achievement from everybody concerned. Frigel's idea of an editorial staff seems in practice to have been carried out by the co-operation of Rosén and Åhlström, who also functioned as inspectors of the KMA. Yet this real challengeable situation was seen only positively; the chorale book was regarded as a result of

consultations. While the KMA emphasized that the edition was equivalent to Swedish singing practice, Hæffner pointed out that the melodies corresponded to the original versions. The KMA required that they should “be established” as “an unchangeable norm” for Swedish hymn-singing — this was still repeated in 1844 — and classified the use of other melodies as “abuse”. Though the Royal opinion was more liberal and saw no necessity for an immediate examination of the question it should be noted that the edition was mentioned as “Hæffner’s established chorale book”.

That the printing was delayed through unpredictable climatic conditions caused Hæffner economic problems for the rest of his life. Problems with a new printing method (stone print) and a smaller market potential than expected made the situation worse. In his efforts to improve the economic situation of his surviving relatives Hæffner often referred to his broad efforts for church music in Sweden. For this he always officially — verbally — was met with acknowledgement. According to his contemporaries he had in an excellent way removed a more than half century-old problem in giving Sweden a new chorale book. That these laudatory words not always resulted in concrete help is to be regretted.

Chapter 9. The ideas behind the chorale books of 1820-21

When the first part of Hæffner’s chorale book began to be spread in 1820 the missing preface appeared as more and more problematic; the score broke with the design used until now in the handwritten chorale books. Accordingly Hæffner, through articles — some however unpublished — in newspapers and magazines, tried to inform and remove the acute problems, at the same time as he referred to the second part of the chorale book and its instructions (1821). But this presumably had a much smaller distribution than the first one.

In this chapter all known information written by Hæffner has been collected and analysed. Besides the document *WMf*, with the melodies selected by the Hymn committee in co-operation with Hæffner, has been compared with the contents of Hæffner’s chorale books. This has revealed many earlier hidden facts and ideas behind the chorale books of 1820-21.

Ideologically Hæffner’s texts show a strong influence from the German pre-Romantic period. A devotional aim is pronounced and by that a coherent character of the chorales. Here was a theomusicological foundation to be found that Hæffner mainly had presented in his preface to the liturgical music of 1817.

Due to Hæffner, with the chorale books as basis the desired “reformation” of Swedish hymn-singing could now be realized and a melodic hymn-singing would in some years again be heard. He considered the critics unfair and uninformed, even if he admitted the existence of errors and shortcomings in his edition. These he wanted to revise. His perspective was not only long-term but also generous. Hæffner repeatedly emphasized that local traditions could be kept for the present, in spite of his own opinion about them being incorrect. The chorale books were primarily intended to constitute a treasury of melodies according to local demands and possibilities, not only in churches but also in schools and gymnasium, as well as for playing at home “for private pleasure and edification”. Fundamentally all known as well as unknown melodies of value in 1697 were re-utilized. Due to metrical reasons but also to a wish to widen the access and variation these had been supplemented by other melodies, partly fetched from Germany, partly new composed. Hæffner himself had contributed 11 new melodies, in spite of his earlier opposition.

Hæffner had worked out the chorales with consideration for the organists so that they would be able to provide a better accompaniment. But he had also done it to make it possible for a choir to sing the chorales in four-parts together with the congregation and as a complement to the organ, or perhaps as an alternative in all those churches where there was no instrument. His ‘Sångskola’ in manuscript contributes with detailed information of his opinion about types of voices and the normal range of untrained voices. For specific occasions he also let print some

chorales for male-choir, as for military use some for brass band. If there were enough instruments the organ could be omitted.

The chorales were also characterized by strict counterpoint without melodic embellishments and also by a very high appreciation of the church modes. They were to be played legato; Hæffner may have been the first in Sweden who printed the word legato. The iso-rhythmical performance seems to be an involuntary concession to singing practice, not really intended by Hæffner. He also criticized all exaggerated tempi, both the too slow and the too quick ones. The ideal tempo he found at regimental prayers. In his opinion at least one half phrase should be sung in one single breath. For his questioning of triple time he had a number of predecessors.

Hæffner was in some issues of another opinion than the Hymn committee, the analysis has shown both conscious and unconscious changes in the choice of melodies. Quite likely the committee and the examiners accepted them. Through the document *WMF* Hæffner's chorale book of 1808 stands out as the main source for the edition of 1820, even if the chorales in some cases were revised for metrical reasons. On the contrary, the chorale book of 1697 was of almost no interest, not only rhythmically but also melodically. However, this implied no break with singing and playing practice, which had long since left the score of 1697, or had perhaps never really corresponded to it. Other sources were the German editions by Kühnau and König from the 18th century; the former Hæffner considered the most reliable even if he also expressed some criticism. These sources were compared with a large amount of other chorale collections, chiefly from Germany. To those some chorales were added, only available in manuscript.

Chapter 10. The reception of the chorale books during Hæffner's lifetime

When the criticism of the chorale book of Hæffner in the 1820's is analysed a new picture arises different from the mostly negative one of later date. Certainly there was criticism, but in the initial stage it seems to have been built more on rumours more than on facts, which Hæffner realized when wishing a careful, just, constructive but also respectable criticism. The reason for the rumours was most likely the absence of a preface, index and information in the first part of the edition (1820).

In the publicly expressed opinions there were very strong expectations of the edition. The formulations used were to a very high degree equivalent to Hæffner's own opinion and actual shaping of the chorales; in other words, the edition was a product in and for its time. Far too long had hymn-singing been neglected, and still was according to those complaining about the voluntary adoption of the new hymnal going too slowly. Generally though, with some exceptions, acceptance seems to have taken place rather quickly.

When the chorale book was available the four-part design was viewed as a big problem; not infrequently organists and precentors were incapable of reading music. From newspaper articles, partly with advisory aim, it is can be understood that the organ was not only an instrument for the accompaniment of the chorales. It also had a symbolic function and was constructive for devotion; thus there was a demand for a special performance of the chorales. Some letters to the press complained about several melodies having been changed, the church modes used and too many melodies "unknown" in Sweden. The last phrase can be understood as a biased defamation of the edition since many of these melodies actually had been used in Sweden and should rather have been described as "now forgotten". It can be noted that the criticism had philosophical overtones; the methods of Hæffner were associated with the German and Swedish early Romanticists' interest in old culture, the disparagingly so-called "childhood" of music. The musical problems thus were summarized as "German".

Here and there demands for a revision of Hæffner's work were raised. One of the most powerful and malignant critics was Carl August Stieler, though he agreed with Hæffner in many

questions. Their opinions differed most about the church modes, where Hæffner was criticized for straining after effect. Among other critics was Wallin, the editor of the hymnal, who privately and improperly accused Hæffner of errors and tricks and in 1822 edited a new hymnal which uses more old and supposedly well known chorale melodies than he himself had proposed in the Hymn Committee. Perhaps also Frigel, the secretary of the KMA, publicly but anonymously made complaints. Here however the identity of the author is problematic; judging from the content, the article contradicted many of the opinions that Frigel earlier had worked for in the Hymn Committee. Another critic was the organist Carl Johan Moberger in Gävle who in manuscript presented his own chorale book, which in its preface criticized Hæffner's design of the chorales as too "weak" for the organ. But the harmonizations were praised — except the use of church mode.

Completely without critical intention the organist David Winge printed a table of selection of melodies as a counterpart to Hæffner's register and as a forerunner to the Minimum table given by the KMA in 1844. Several local adaptations of the chorale book also have been found, more or less built on criticism. A central figure was Åhlström, one of the inspectors of the chorale book, who in cooperation with J J Hedrén, chaplain to the King, already in 1825, presented some alternative chorale melodies, which later were brought into his printed chorale book of 1832. During the discussions in Riksdagen of 1829 about a compulsory adoption of the hymnal, the Peasants witnessed a surprisingly positive attitude in most of the parishes of the country; mostly the problems with both text and music had been overcome. In a newspaper article from Skåne the tendency to employ uneducated preceptors and organists was declared as the main problem — not the new chorale book itself. To summarize, uniformly negative criticism of Hæffner's edition was not the case.

Chapter 11. The implementation of the Swedish chorale reform

For the chorale reform and the dissemination of Hæffner's chorale book the KMA was a very important factor. Its meeting minutes show great confidence in Hæffner's work and knowledge in spite of the distance to his home in Uppsala and some criticism in the newspapers. Instead this edition during all the investigated years (until 1835) is treated as a product of the KMA, even though the KMA was aware of the necessity of pedagogical efforts in the parishes.

Within a year the edition was used parallel with other collections of chorales at examinations of organ playing; this was evaluated both from Hæffner's four-part score and from thorough bass, his edition could be used in both cases. The edition was also totally in line with the new regulations which Åhlström and Rosén had written in 1824 for the music education at the KMA; church modes and four-part chorale writing were emphasized as central precepts. Through a decision by the the KMA the very slow and solemn chorale tempo of those days came to be secured, though in spite of some desires that it should be increased. The examinees of the KMA grew in amount by an increasing number of students and by people applying for posts as music teachers or organists. The preserved certificates not only document the different levels of skill of the examinees but also the established position that Hæffner's chorale book had rapidly obtained. Also for singing in schools the edition would be the common basic book. The demand on organs that this book created in the churches soon led to efforts by the KMA to support and develop the national organ builders, for example through examinations. For the development of organ playing Rosén, one of the inspectors of the chorale book, translated and printed an originally German manual with some additions, such as references to the chorale book of Hæffner. At the same time for his own playing he astonishingly seems to have used a manuscript written by Åhlström.

To improve the singing of the congregations the dean Johan Dillner did some pioneer work that later had several imitators who together secured the future of the chorale book. The problem was the general public whose insufficient ability to read music was solved by a musical notation using numerals in combination with a easily played instrument for the practise of the melodies. Dillner's method was presented by Wallin in the Riksdag with support of several acknowledged

musicians, among others Hæffner. The KMA desired that all parishes in the Kingdom should be requested to use this method, since all were in need of improvement in chorale singing.

In his numerical chorale book *Psalmmodikon* Dillner in 1830 presented not only the melodies in an easily comprehensible way, but also informed the readers of his theomusicological ideas. Here was a strong Moravian influence, even though Dillner in some respects also showed criticism towards this singing tradition. Considering the wide distribution of his edition the significance of this theomusicology should not be underestimated. Emphasized was the strong communicative ability of chorale music, founded on symbolism and style of music, thus both cognitive and psychological. However, for its effectiveness a carefully prepared pedagogy was needed. Though Dillner placed the old modal melodies in a unique position, he did not hesitate to recognize instrumental music and major/minor tonality as also being of value. The four-part singing of chorales was described as a musical religious exercise. However, his purpose was not to replace the unison singing of the congregation with a four-part choir, but to improve its purity and euphony. As a choirmaster Dillner encouraged singing in his parishes and the audible results surprised not only his neighbourhood but also the KMA.

Another important private effort came from Olof Åhlström, the member of the KMA who already in 1788 had received a mandate to produce a new chorale book. Since then he had been working on the chorale question in the form of new compositions and also on the aforementioned collection for Rosén. Perhaps that was done parallel to his involvement in the chorale book of Hæffner in the autumn of 1820. Some years before his death he finally printed a chorale book of his own in 1832. The content does not expose general criticism against Hæffner's edition, it could rather be seen as a complement. A comparison of the editions reveals that the pronounced melodic differences are concentrated to about fifteen chorales. Around 70% of the content in principle corresponded to the chorale book of Hæffner. This also shows that Hæffner's chorale books to a great extent corresponded to "the usual song of the Swedish Church", as Åhlström advertised his edition. Also the harmonizations show a fundamentally similar view of tonality. The differences are not systematic, rather they reveal subjectivity and ambivalence by Åhlström. By that he stands out as a mediator of Hæffner's chorale book to the organists — as Dillner mediated it to the musically less educated parishioners — all under supervision of the KMA.

Chapter 12. Hymn-singing in Sweden in the late 19th century

The spreading of the individualized way of singing chorales questions the description by Knut Brodin in 1928 of the chorale reform of 1820 as a "stab of death" to the "melodies of the people" — which nevertheless provocatively has given this thesis its title. This assertion has since then been repeated several times and an evaluation of its truth requires an examination of how chorale singing developed in the 19th century. Already a smaller investigation shows that the ornamented way of singing gradually disappeared from the churches, though it still could be found here and there at the end of the century. In some places — but absolutely not everywhere — the result was a silencing of the congregation, which surely led to concern and recommendations of action. Thus Hæffner was in principle right in his supposition that his (new) ideal for the chorales would generally be accepted, even if both he and posterity more often discussed the problems in terms of melody than ornamentation.

Among those "responsible" for the singing of the congregation at the Church synod of 1883 a desire to strike the golden mean was observed. As an argument for a more radical attitude was the already introduced "rhythmical" chorale in combination with an idea of a "genuine" popular way of singing. Through a new definition of the latter as 'rhythmical' rather than ornamented the chorale book of 1697 turned to be the ideal of the now desired reform. A conglomeration of characteristics typical of the period was motivating this reform: national, Gregorian and rhythmical ideas that later disappeared from the visual field and finally let Hæffner alone deal his

“stab of death”. True, some critics excused him: as a German he could not possibly understand the distinctive nature of the “Swedish” chorale.

Simultaneous with this criticism of Hæffner the so-called folk-musical chorale melodies were rediscovered by non-organists. Some organists had ever since Åhlström devoted themselves to national melody variants, also Hæffner. The meeting in Mora of Nils Andersson and the singer “Finn-Karin” in 1910 was historically important. His idea that the “old” national chorales intentionally had been “normalized” and pressed into “stiff, narrow and cold forms” indeed had a great impact, but it must be described as an incorrect historiography. Nevertheless, in defence of Andersson it could be said that he had forerunners. The gradually changing pattern of description contains many still uninvestigated problems; in concluding chapter I have only suggested some characteristics.

One of those before Andersson that had contributed to the circulation of these ideas in Sweden was Oscar Byström, after his meeting in 1883 with Finn-Karin and the clergyman Johan Gabriëlsson in Mora. The latter not unlikely had planted a *second* tradition of national chorale singing, marked by the new collective *unison* ideal in contrast to the older individualized improvisatory one. The whole congregation now sang these old personally invented melodies in unison. Opinion about chorale singing in older times in the churches came to be characterized by this newborn practice. Byström partly supported his propaganda for this type of song with an assertion that Hæffner had changed opinion after a visit in Mora where he heard popular chorale singing. It has not been possible to prove this statement as true, and the indications for its truth are weak.

From several travel books it can also be seen that the new hæffnerian chorale did not cause any major problems, on the contrary they were sung powerfully and convincingly. Nevertheless, the reason for providing the church in Mora with an organ in 1912 was most likely that the old leaders of the song no longer were there. The choir had, as a kind of new leader of the chorales, a close connection to the organ. Possibly its more well practised singing also reduced the desire to sing among the rest of the congregation. The generally rather deteriorated song at the end of 19th century was also due to reduced attendance rate through industrialism, migration and the growth of the free churches.

During the 1910’s signs of a positive renewal of hymn-singing were seen. But despite all criticism against the hæffnerian ideal they had penetrated the singing and replaced the old way of singing as a satisfactory means of expressing devotion. A partly idealized memory of the older individualized chorale singing still was alive, though, with intellectual importance.

To sum up, the description of the Hæffner chorale as a “stab of death” towards the popular singing practice has a certain degree of truth. But at the same time it must be stressed that the course of events contains many aspects that too easily are forgotten. Since the middle of the 19th century, when the criticism was formulated in earnest, Hæffner’s personal contribution has been given nearly mythical dimensions. In the discussions the intentions of him and his contemporaries have often been forgotten. Further there has been a tendency to describe the singing in the church as better than it actually was by speaking of it as a “national art of music”; often it sounded rather chaotic.

To a great extent Hæffner’s chorale book was a manifestation of values characteristic of the period and means for the realization of a desire prevalent in some circles to give the singing of the congregation a more unison and ordered design, though sometimes four-parts. As such it still very much exists — despite all changes.

© Anders Dillmar 2001